

ALDO LEOPOLD FOUNDATION
Box 77
Baraboo WI 53913

Mayor Richard Berry
City of Albuquerque
PO Box 1293
Albuquerque, NM 87103

Sept. 15, 2013

RE: Albuquerque's Rio Grande Vision Plan

Dear Mayor Berry,

I write as the daughter of ALDO LEOPOLD who was a prime instigator of the **Rio Grande Bosque** plan to conserve this ecologically important and attractive area as a public park. My father served as the first Secretary of the Albuquerque Chamber of Commerce from 1918-1919, and it was one of his pet projects to create a park along the Bosque Rio Grande.

The New Mexico State Legislature did act on Dad's vision and created a State Park there, to maintain the scenic and natural beauty of the flood plain that borders Albuquerque. I myself visited the park in 2010 when our Emmy winning film, "Green Fire" opened at the Albuquerque theater nearby. It is a beautiful area!

Your City Council strengthened the state legislation in 1933 by adopting a Bosque Action Plan to preserve the natural beauty and ecology of the park. Land decisions were to be ecologically compatible with the natural condition. The park management was to be designed to preserve its ecological diversity. An Open Space Advisory Board was to review all future actions.

The park has served Albuquerque well over the last almost hundred years. Its natural state has been altered by some brush cutting and trail widening, which has diminished the habitat somewhat. But still it is a beautiful quite natural area and deserves to be maintained and cared for. Few American cities can boast a riverside stretch of cottonwood trees and open habitat such as what you have in Albuquerque.

Your new Rio Grande Vision plan goes against all this. We at the Aldo Leopold Foundation are deeply alarmed by the new plan that would, if enacted, work against the goal of having an extensive area of wild nature and bird habitat along the river bordering the city. We feel that the Rio Grande Vision discards the protective mechanisms for the existing park—the city's Bosque action plan which established policies to ensure the conservation of the bosque in its natural state. We are especially concerned that some of the outdoor research groups, such as Hawks Aloft, Inc., that have monitored bird use in the bosque for the last 10 years, have not yet been brought into the planning process. Their work has shown

that bird use of the bosque has dropped alarmingly with even the minor improvements made on the bosque trails and brush removal. All the more reason to protect with care what is left.

An earlier suggestion was that you could establish a technical advisory group with expertise on wildlife conservation created to help you ensure that the Rio Grande Vision really is compatible with modern conservation science.

Albuquerque was the first home of my parents when Aldo Leopold worked for the Chamber of Commerce there. He built a home on 13th street overlooking the bosque. As a hunter and wildlife expert, he was deeply appreciative of the bosque, its beauty and its habitat. I trust that you will want to conserve the ecological values there that your City Council worked to protect all these years.

My family on both sides have deep roots in the Albuquerque and Santa Fe area. My brothers have told me many good stories about the bosque behind 13th St and the Hunning castle. Our connection to the Rio Grande is strong. Our Aldo Leopold Foundation is indeed concerned over the development plan forwarded by your office.

I send regards with a deep hope that you will step back and determine a way to reconsider the Rio Grande Vision--and not to over-ride the good conservation practices that have preserved the bosque all these years.

Sincerely,

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